

RESPONSE FROM CAL POLY TO 60 ORGANIZATIONS

From: Jeffrey Dyer Armstrong

Subject: 60 Organizations Call for Steps to Address Exclusionary Behavior at Cal Poly

Date: May 21, 2018 at 4:01:59 PM PDT

To: Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

Cc: Timothy White, Lars Walton, Garrett P. Ashley, Jessica Lyn Darin, Chris Murphy, Keith B. Humphrey, Barbara L. Rische, Dawn Theodora

Dear Ms. Rossman-Benjamin:

First, I want to thank you for taking the time to share your concerns and suggestions regarding the recent events on our campus. As you can imagine, I have heard from many students, alumni, faculty and staff; as well as from an extended community of caring Cal Poly supporters and friends. I have tried to be responsive; but have not always been timely while dealing with an evolving set of circumstances. I apologize for the delay in getting back to you.

Please know that from the very start of this situation - beginning with the student protests, through the much publicized "list of demands" generated by an unofficial student group; throughout our ongoing efforts today - I have always steadfastly stated that I personally, as well as my administration and staff - wholly reject any consideration of a demand that is so inconsistent with our institutional values - which clearly support diversity, inclusion, respect and equality for all.

The University will continue to assure anyone inquiring about the group demand regarding the exclusion of Zionist organizations that it is viewed as it has been from the very beginning - as completely devoid of credibility having no place in any conversation. This is why we chose not to specifically address it in our public response, as we felt to do so would have only legitimized a divisive and inappropriate political statement. Instead, we chose to pro-actively address the positive, inclusive campus-wide efforts we have implemented and continue to promote.

Two-weeks ago, prior to the Baker Forum; (a campus-wide forum which this year included an open discussion on the topics of racism and the importance of inclusion within our community); I shared a personal [video](#) message with all of our students, faculty and staff which addressed our institutional values - and emphasized the imperative need for mutual respect of each other's beliefs, specifically naming Jewish, Muslim, and Christian beliefs, as well as that of non-believers. Please know that this has been a difficult time for everyone on campus, and we are trying to engage and improve; but our work is not done.

Again, I thank you for the suggestions you have shared with me; and want to assure you that I am well aware of the very real hurt and sorrow many of our students have endured. I wish I could take the hurt away; but I cannot. What I can do is reinforce my personal commitment to you that I will work tirelessly to maintain a safe and welcoming and inclusive campus; ensuring

that every students feels secure and is allowed to learn and thrive with the distraction of an ignorant mindset or the actions of a few. This will happen if we continue to stand together as a strong campus community and face our personal differences and ideologies through civil and inclusive conversation - based on respect and appreciation of one another; instead of resentment or ridicule.

Please reach out again if I can address any concerns or questions you may have. Best wishes.
Jeff.

Jeffrey D. Armstrong | President
California Polytechnic State University
One Grand Avenue | San Luis Obispo, California 93407